

VZCZCXRO7932
PP RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHMO #0744 0781233
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 181233Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7191
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4363

UNCLAS MOSCOW 000744

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: LAVROV LINKS TIBET UNREST TO KOSOVO

REF: BEIJING 975

¶1. Foreign Minister Lavrov linked the recent unrest in Tibet to Kosovo, telling the press that the violence in Lhasa had not occurred "by chance." In an interview published March 18 in Rossiskaya Gazeta, Lavrov used Tibet to demonstrate how Kosovo's independence had "already reverberated" among separatists in various parts of the world, warning that "we are at the beginning of a very precarious process."

¶2. The MFA expressed a familiar position on the Tibetan unrest, issuing a brief March 17 statement that said this was an "internal matter" for China to resolve. The statement went on to say that Russia hoped Chinese authorities would "take all necessary measures to end illegal actions and secure an early return to normalcy," failing to condemn the GOC crackdown in Lhasa (reftel). The MFA reiterated that Russia considered Tibet an "integral part" of China and resolving relations with the Dalai Lama "an internal affair." In a reference to calls by human right campaigners to boycott the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, the MFA said attempts to politicize the Olympics were "unacceptable" and expressed confidence in China's ability to organize and provide security for the games.

¶3. Alexey Maslov, an Asia expert at Moscow State University, went a step further than Lavrov, telling RIA Novosti that the U.S. was behind the Tibetan unrest. The USG was using the "Kosovar script" to incite an armed independence struggle against China prior to the Olympic games, according to Maslov, who predicted that the U.S. Congress would take steps to boycott the Olympics and introduce political sanctions against China in response to events in Tibet.

BURNS